

THE INFLUENCE OF
CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
ON
ROMAN CATHOLICISM
IN THE
United States of America.

[Read at the Conference of the Evangelical Alliance at Geneva, Sep. 7th, 1861.]

On the 23d day of June, 1757, was fought the battle of Plassy. The hero of that battle was Robert Clive. The victory which the troops of the East India Company there achieved over Surajah Dowlah laid the foundation of what became, in less than a century, the vast British Empire in India, with 175,000,000 inhabitants. The battle referred to terminated forever the hopes of both Mohammedanism and Romanism for supremacy in India, and secured that great country as a domain for Protestant Christianity.

Two years later, (on the 12th day of September, 1759,) the battle of the Heights of Abraham, of which General Wolfe was both the hero and the victim, destroyed forever the ascendancy of Rome and the Jesuits in North America, by transferring to Great Britain the vast possessions of France in the Canadas, and the great country which stretches far southward, between the Allegheny and the Rocky Mountains. Thus in two short years the French Crown lost a prospective empire in the plains of India, and an actual one in the valleys of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi, which combined exceeded twice the extent of Europe. This was a great loss for "the son of St. Louis;" it was a greater one for the "pretended successor of St. Peter" the Fisherman.

But this was not all. France ceded to Spain the great territory of Louisiana at the mouth of the Mississippi, by the same treaty (that of Paris 1763,) by which she ceded the Canadas and the Valley of the Mississippi to England:—thus giving to that Roman Catholic Kingdom complete dominion on the north coast of the Gulf of Mexico. In the year 1800 France recovered Louisiana, but only to sell it in 1803 to the United States. In 1821 Spain sold Florida to the United States; in 1845 Texas, after having been torn from Mexico, was annexed to the United States; and thus the domain of Protestantism was still further enlarged. In 1848, New Mexico and the country between it and the Pacific Ocean, including Upper California, was added to the United States. These political changes contributed immensely to enlarge the territorial extent of Protestantism in North America. With the exception of the Russian possessions in the north western corner, and the Republic of Mexico, and the States of Central America in the

south, Protestantism has gained territorial possession of the whole of that vast continent.

Equally great has been the numerical increase of Protestantism in North America. In the British possessions, where in the days of the French dominion, Romanism had complete and undisputed possession of the ground, the Protestants are nearly three times as numerous as the Roman Catholics. In the United States, seven-eighths of whose area once belonged to France and Spain, and by consequence, were under the Spiritual sway of the Bishop of Rome, the most ardent partizan of the Pope will hardly maintain that one person in seven is a Roman Catholic. It would, probably, be nearer the truth to say that not more than the one-eighth part of the population, (now more than 31,000,000,) is to be reckoned among the adherents of the Roman Catholic Church.

The discoveries of John and Sebastian Cabot gave to England her claim to a large portion of the Atlantic coast of North America ; and when she successfully commenced the colonization of that coast in 1607, the French were in possession of the northern part of it, and the Spanish the southern. Several of the charters which the English monarchs gave to the colonies planted under their auspices, affected to give a title to the country westward as far as the "South Sea," or what we call the Pacific Ocean. The colonies, even in the outset, with one temporary exception, were Protestant—including those from Holland and Sweden. But when these colonies began to push their way across the Allegheny Mountains into the great central valley, they found it studded over with French villages and Jesuit missionaries. Du Quêsne, (now Pittsburgh,) Detroit, Vincennes, St. Louis, Kaskaskia, Natchez, New Orleans, Mobile, were Roman Catholic settlements,—as much so as Montreal and Quebec in Canada, and St. Augustine in Florida. But how great the change ! In Louisiana, where the Roman Catholic Church had great advantages, and where there was not one Protestant Church in 1803, Protestantism has now a vast influence, if not a complete ascendancy. Out of the original province or territory that bore that name, and was acquired from France during the Consulate of Napoleon I., there have been formed no less than five if not six large states, in all except one of which, Protestantism is the religion of the majority of the people. In Florida, Texas and California, Romanism is now an insignificant element. In only one city or town of importance, (that of New Orleans,) in all the great valley of the Mississippi does the Roman Catholic Church have a majority of the people, even in those in which it was the dominant communion at the commencement of this century. In Maryland, which was, in an important sense, a Roman Catholic colony, the Roman Catholic ascendancy lasted but a little while. Whatever may have been the cause—whether it is to be sought in the political movements which severed the French and Spanish colonies spoken of, from their respective mother-countries, or in the superior qualifications of the Teutonic or Saxon race over the Latin for colonization, or the divine energy of the Gospel, which Protestantism carries with it, or all these combined,—certain it is, that Romanism has nowhere held its own when brought into contact with Protestantism in that part of North America which now constitutes British America and the United States.

These general remarks will suffice to prepare the way for the consideration of the subject more immediately before us, namely: "*The Influence of Civil and Religious Liberty on Roman Catholicism in the United States of America.*"

We must say in advance, that the nature of the subject is such that it demands the array of quite a number of particulars, and a careful appreciation of them and their relative forces, in order that we may fairly comprehend the extent and strength of the influence of the civil and religious institutions of the United States upon the Roman Catholic Church, its doctrines and teachings, its practices and ceremonies, and its relations to the State and civil Society. It is necessary also, at the very threshold of our inquiries, to have a correct idea of the nature and extent of the double liberty spoken of in the proposition which we purpose to consider. We begin then, by stating that the civil government of the United States, by its constitution and laws, guarantees just as fully to the Roman Catholic all his rights—of person, property, citizenship, religion, conscience, and worship—as it does to the Protestant. On this point there is no difference whatever. All the rights which a Protestant can claim or possess under the Constitution and laws, a Roman Catholic may claim and possess. The same thing is true of the Jew and every other religionist. It is impossible to conceive of religious liberty being more complete or equal, than it is under the Constitution and laws of the United States. This state of things has existed as long as the Constitution has existed, namely, more than seventy years. In fact, it may be said to have existed as long as the Government of the United States has existed, which is eighty-six years. During all that period, all citizens of the United States, whether such by birth or naturalization, have enjoyed the same rights, privileges, and immunities, without regard to religious opinions or forms of worship. And the practice of the Government has been in conformity with the theory of the law. Among those who have held offices or posts of trust or honor, in connection with the general Government, have been and are now, men of all religious communions,—Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, Jews as well as Christians. Roman Catholics, and even Jews have been members of Congress, have been judges in the National Courts, and have held posts in the army and navy.

In the early period of some of the colonies there was little religious liberty, and in some none at all. The rights of citizenship were confined to those persons who held the creed and belonged to the Church of the Commonwealth. Such intolerance prevailed to about an equal degree North and South; nor was it confined to the British colonies in America; it was the error of the age. And whatever merit the friends and admirers of Roger Williams and Lord Baltimore, (Sir Charles Calvert,) may claim for them, it is probable that their very liberal opinions on the subject of religious liberty, and the laws which they caused to be enacted in the colonies of Rhode Island and Maryland, had much less influence upon the whole country than the noble institutions which Pennsylvania received at the hands of William Penn, her great founder. Step by step, however, liberal sentiments advanced. A great battle for the rights of conscience and of worship was fought in Virginia shortly after the

Revolution, by the Presbyterians and Baptists, aided by Thomas Jefferson, afterwards President of the United States. State after State, both north and south, dissolved all the bonds which united the Church and the State, until now there is not a vestige remaining. Religious liberty is complete—the rights of Protestants, of Roman Catholics, of Jews, and all other religionists are now as fully guaranteed by the Constitutions and laws of the several individual States as by the Constitution and laws of the United States. The last States which reached this elevated platform were New Hampshire and North Carolina. In both, the Jew and the Romanist, though they might enjoy every other right and privilege—even the right of maintaining and propagating their religious opinions and worship—for a long time could hold no office of the State. But this exception exists no longer.

In all parts of the United States the Romanist has the same right to buy land, build a church-edifice, or chapel, have religious services on such days, and at such hours, day or night, as may suit his wishes or convenience. All that the laws require is that the title-deeds of his church-property, including a cemetery, shall be in accordance with the statutes made for the holding of such property; and that in celebrating divine worship the rights and comforts of others shall not be interfered with. In these respects he stands on the same level with his fellow citizens of all other religious persuasions or communions. And this has been the state of things with us for many years. The question: “What has been the influence of it upon Roman Catholicism,” is certainly a pertinent one. To the task of giving an answer to that inquiry we are now prepared to address ourselves.

1. The first effect of the religious liberty which exists in the United States, so unbounded and complete, on the mind of every Romanist who reaches the shores of that country, we may unhesitatingly affirm to be ADMIRATION. We believe that this sentiment is universal, at least so far as the intelligent portions of the Roman Catholics are concerned—the portions that are capable of comprehending and appreciating the nature and the value of this great boon. We have neither met with, nor heard of, a well educated Romanist, layman or ecclesiastic, who does not admire this great characteristic of American institutions, that conscience and religious worship are as free as the air of heaven. Distinguished Roman Catholic laymen in America are not slow to express their admiration of this feature in the civil government. Its justice and fairness commend themselves to their more unsophisticated natures. And even the most bigoted priest, who would deny the rights of conscience and religious worship to Protestants in Roman Catholic countries, cannot but rejoice that the establishment of this great principle in the United States, gives to him all the advantages which he could ask for in his attempts to propagate the dogmas and practices of his Church in a country so vast and important. Nor is this effect confined to Romanists in America.

On the 10th day of October, 1846, we were walking in the Prado in Madrid, waiting for the arrival of the royal cortége in its progress from the Palace to the Church of Atocha, whither the *Queen*, Isabella II., who had been married the night before, accompanied by the *grandees* of Spain, was to go to assist at some religious ceremony.

With the exception of an imperial procession, which we once saw in the great street of the Nevsky Perspective at St. Petersburg, it far exceeded in gorgeousness anything which we have ever seen. Wishing to know more of the affair than we had been able to learn from the Spanish newspapers, we approached a group of well-dressed gentlemen and ladies, and asked for the information which we desired. Instantly one of the party, who proved to be a most intelligent and influential lawyer, offered to go with us and explain everything. Soon after meeting his brother-in-law, who was a colonel in the army, both those gentlemen gave themselves up to us for two or three hours, communicating much valuable information respecting the character and position of the various celebrities as they passed along in the procession. Afterwards they walked with us through several streets of the city, discoursing on the then present state of Spain, its political parties, etc. Learning that we were Protestants, they both said that they would give a great deal to see the Protestant Religion introduced into Spain; for although they had never been in a Protestant country in their lives, they had read enough about the United States, England, and other Protestant nations to be convinced that Protestantism must be a far better religion than the Roman Catholic. One of them said that his first favorable ideas of the United States were received from a Jesuit professor in a college at Rome, where he had pursued his studies. That professor had spent several years in America, chiefly at Georgetown, D. C., and he often interested the young men of his class by recounting to them facts and anecdotes about the people and institutions of the United States. And with so much enthusiasm did he speak of the *Religious Liberty* prevailing in that country, that he quite imparted his admiration to the entire class.

Nine years before the time to which we have just referred, we spent a considerable period in the city of Rome, during which we made the acquaintance of a distinguished professor in the Collegio Romano, one of the best known of the literary institutions of that city. In one of the many conversations about the United States which we had with him, he informed us that the Roman Hierarchy (the Pope and Cardinals,) had no little trouble with the ecclesiastics who returned from the United States, on the ground that few of them had remained there for any considerable number of years without being decidedly and dangerously influenced by the spirit of its institutions. "The Sacred College," said he, "stand much in doubt respecting the most of the priests and bishops of European origin who stay five or ten years in America." He then added that they were greatly dissatisfied with Bishop England, of South Carolina, when he was last in Rome, because of the liberality of his opinions and the freedom with which he uttered them.

On no subject have the Roman Catholic orators, lecturers and editors in the United States, whether clergymen or laymen, more eloquently descanted than on Religious Liberty. Having but one solitary case in the history of the country, that of Lord Baltimore's colony in Maryland, in which a Roman Catholic government adopted, of its own accord, liberal principles, they have made the most of it. We suppose that a respectable volume could be made up of the speeches, lectures and essays which those gentlemen have delivered. We have often re-

gretted that they have not had more cases which they might turn to account. In default of this, they are compelled to look abroad to find in the history of the past some instances in which Roman Catholics, where they have the control of measures, have done anything in favor of religious liberty. But this has been a difficult undertaking. And when they have found something in Belgium, Sardinia, Brazil and New Grenada, they have encountered a great drawback in the fact that in every case the religious liberty that has been granted owes its existence to the efforts of men who have been Roman Catholics only in name, if even so much ; while, in all those cases, the Roman Catholic hierarchy of those countries, sustained by the Pope himself, have been utterly opposed to the liberal measures in question ; for if there is any one principle to which Rome is more opposed than any other, it is that of Religious Liberty.

But however reluctant the Romish clergy in America may be to advocate the doctrine of Religious Liberty, excepting in Protestant countries where it might turn to the advantage of their Church, it is certainly true that the laity, especially of the higher classes and of American birth, are strongly in favor of it, and are ready to say so openly. And the fact that in the United States they owe the ample liberty of conscience and worship to a constitution and laws which are the work of Protestant legislators, is not without due weight and proper appreciation in the minds of enlightened Romanists.

2. In the next place, the enjoyment of Religious Liberty on the part of the intelligent Romanists of the United States, especially those of American origin, leads them to entertain very correct views of the unreasonableness and wickedness of persecution for the sake of religion, and often to express them. This feeling is, of course, more prevalent among the laity than the clergy. We could cite many remarkable examples of this if it were necessary. Not to speak of the living, we are confident that no Protestants could have a more just abhorrence of religious persecution in every form than the late Judge Gaston, of North Carolina, or the late Robert Walsh, of Philadelphia, men of distinguished talents and of vast acquirements, though in very different branches of knowledge, both of whom were sincere Roman Catholics to their dying day. It would certainly be very difficult, if not quite impossible, to find an enlightened, or even respectable, Roman Catholic of American birth who would for a moment attempt to justify the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Without doubt there are among the bishops and their clergy not a few who in their hearts abhor persecution but dare not avow it, lest they might, in so doing, condemn the acts as well as the dogmas of their Church. They will go so far as to condemn openly and even violently persecution of Roman Catholics in Protestant countries, but cannot be induced to open their mouths in condemnation of intolerance, and of the persecution of Protestants, in Roman Catholic countries. At the largest and most interesting meeting of the sort which has ever been held in the city of New York, that in behalf of the persecuted Madias, Archbishop Hughes, who was present, and many of his clergy, was conjured to join us in a memorial to the Duke of Tuscany in behalf of these poor suffering persons, with the assurance that the Protestants would most heartily join him in re-

monstrance, memorial, and every other proper effort in behalf of persecuted or oppressed Roman Catholics in Sweden, or any other Protestant country where such persecution or oppression existed. But the appeal to those gentlemen was made in vain! Yet the noble sentiments uttered in that meeting, and in one afterwards held in behalf of the rights of the Protestant to Christian sepulture in Papal countries, and of another still, in behalf of the persecuted in Sweden, both Protestants and Romanists, found a response in many an honest Roman Catholic heart among us.

It may be affirmed without the slightest fear of contradiction, that on no one point or subject is there more complete unanimity among Protestants in America, including even the staunchest adherents of their own peculiar religious opinions, whether relating to doctrines or forms of worship, than that of religious liberty—liberty for all, to hold, to practise, and to propagate their religious views and convictions. And by consequence, they must cordially abhor everything like intolerance and persecution. These sentiments prevail, we are sure, among the well-informed classes of Romanists and all other religionists. We can not give a stronger proof of either the extent or the force of these sentiments in the United States, than to relate a circumstance which occurred in the year 1853. That year was rendered memorable in the annals of the Roman Catholic Church, and of the country, by the advent among us of Monsignor Bedini, (titular Bishop of Thebes,) as a Nuncio of His Holiness, charged with the office of regulating sundry matters relating to that Church. On the last Sabbath in October the consecration of three bishops took place in the Church of St. Patrick (the Cathedral) in New York, in which the distinguished stranger took a very prominent part, as was natural enough. The church was crowded to its utmost capacity, as might be expected. The next day several columns of the morning papers were filled with a minute account of the gorgeous procession from the “Archiepiscopal Palace” to the church, ceremonies, music, etc., etc., of the occasion. Among other things, the oath, or what purported to be such, which each of the three bishops took was given. As there had been a good deal said in the controversies which had been carried on in the journals between the Protestants and Romanists about the oath which Roman Catholic bishops are required to take at their consecration, the officers of the AMERICAN and FOREIGN CHRISTIAN UNION, the society which has for years been foremost in every thing that relates to such matters, sent a friend to the Right Rev. Dr. Hughes, the Archbishop of New York, to request him to put them in the way of obtaining a copy of the veritable oath that would be used on the occasion referred to. His Grace condescended to give them the information which they desired, and they sent a gentleman who was well qualified for the task, with the *Pontificale Romanum* in his hand, the book which the Archbishop assured us contained the oath—in Latin, of course—and which we had no doubt was to be used on the occasion. But what was the surprise of the gentleman of the Society to find that in the oath as given in the newspapers there were many omissions, and among them the famous sentence: “*Hæreticos, schismaticos, et rebelles eidem Domino nostro, vel successoribus prædictis, pro posse persequar et impugnabo.*” [*Heretics, schismatics and rebels to our said*

lord (the Pope) or his aforesaid successors, I will, according to my power, persecute and oppose.] An animated controversy took place in the columns of the New York *Daily Times* and other papers, in the course of which the fact came out, (so the advocates of Rome averred,) that the present Pope, Pius IX., did, in 1846, at the request of the Sixth Council of the Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States, held in Baltimore in that year, consent that certain "*feudal phrases*" in the old oath might be omitted! Such is the account which the Rev. Dr. Kendrick (now Archbishop of Baltimore,) has given of this matter in a little work which he published in Philadelphia in the year 1851. His words are: "In order to take away all occasion of cavil, the present Pope, at the solicitation of the Bishops of the Sixth Council of Baltimore, consented to the omission of the feudal phrases, and sanctioned the simpler form, which is here subjoined, to be used by all the Bishops in the United States."

This is certainly a curious affair. That a Pope would undertake to modify the oath that is taken, so far as we know, by every Roman Catholic Bishop in all other countries in favor of the Romish Bishops in the United States, and after it had been used there for more than sixty years, is passing strange. It may be so; and if so, what a proof of the outside pressure in that country, that will no longer tolerate the use of such language. It is possible that the "simpler oath" may really imply all the "feudal phrases" the old one expressed, but it does not so strike the minds of the people.

3. A third and quite kindred influence of the civil and religious liberty which prevails in the United States is seen in the fact that the adherents of the Roman Catholic religion, from whatever country in Europe they may come, almost invariably upon their arrival, or as soon as they become somewhat acquainted with the country, fall into the political party which is considered the most favorable to the largest political liberty. In Europe it has been a very common charge brought against the Roman Catholic Church, that it has been the invariable friend of absolute government, and by consequence the enemy of popular liberty and popular institutions. The late Abbé de la Mennais admits the truth of this charge in his "*Rome*," and some of his other writings, and conjures the Pope, as the Head of a Church that was founded by the Great Friend of the People—who was himself born in a stable, and died on a cross—to espouse the side of the people in the great struggle between liberty and despotism. It will hardly be doubted, we suppose, that the Hierarchy of Rome, in Europe, from the humblest parish priest up to the Pope himself, have usually been the friends of despotism, rather than free institutions under any name or form.

In America not only do the laity of the Roman Catholic Church, as a general thing, fall quickly into the party that holds the most popular principles—such as universal suffrage, and the shortest period for naturalization—but the priests also, although not quite so promptly, attach themselves to that party and become the advocates of the broadest liberty. Sometimes a priest may be found who will maintain that Rome has ever been the friend of popular liberty, and even a leader in the sacred cause! Men have even been found who, in the face of all history, have the courage to assert that the Roman Catholic Church has

in all ages been the friend of popular rights and a popular form of government! And an Archbishop has even been known to go down into the political arena, on the eve of a Presidential election, and advocate the claims of the democratic candidate! In scarcely any one thing is the influence of our institutions more marked than in the fact of their making the adherents of Rome the friends and *partisans*, if one may so speak, of popular liberty. It would be difficult, we apprehend, to find a monarchist among the Romanist laity in the United States, or even among the clergy who have been many years in that country, especially the lower orders of the clergy. It is worthy of remark, however, that among the Roman Catholics of American birth there has been more of what has been called a conservative spirit. Such persons ranged themselves rather with the Whig than the Democratic party, before the commencement of the present deplorable civil war, which has, for the time, almost obliterated all old parties of every name. In proof of this it may be stated that in Maryland and Louisiana, where there is a very large, old, and highly respectable body of Romanists, the principles of the Whig party, at whose head stood, in their day, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, were long in the ascendant. But whether found in the ranks of the more or the less conservative political parties, the Romanist of the United States is almost invariably in favor of liberal institutions, constitutional government, and freedom of the press. Certainly a very wonderful volume might be formed by bringing together the choicest speeches and essays of Roman Catholic bishops, priests, lecturers and editors, advanced on the subject just named, contrasted with the utterances of Romish bishops and other adherents of the Romish Church in France, Austria, Spain, Ireland and other Roman Catholic countries, on the same topics, within the last few years, to go back no further.

4. The influence of the civil and religious institutions of the United States on Romanism in that country is seen in the strong desire of the people, even in the lowest classes of the newly arrived immigrants from Ireland, and other countries of Europe, to have their children educated. Ignorant as these people may be, they quickly learn that some degree of education is absolutely necessary to success in life in that country. Nor are they very long in learning that the Public Schools, which, in nineteen cases out of twenty, are taught by Protestant teachers, as they were originated by Protestant exertion, are better than those founded by the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, the chief thing that that Church has aimed at in all her efforts to plant schools in America, has been to propagate her religion. On this account her "nuns" and her "monks" and "priests" are much more in earnest to draw into their schools Protestant children, and especially orphans, as more easily made subservient to her purposes, than to educate the children of Roman Catholic parents. The same aim controls all her efforts in the planting of higher schools and colleges. It may be said, with truth, of all her educational institutions, from the lowest primary school to the college, they are greatly inferior to the Protestant institutions in the extent, thoroughness, and value of the instruction imparted in them. The only superiority that can possibly be claimed for any of their secondary schools and colleges, is that more attention is paid to modern languages, especially French, than in Protestant institutions of a cor-

responding grade. Even of the three millions of children and youth in the Protestant Sabbath Schools in the United States, there is a considerable number that belong to Romanist families, notwithstanding all the efforts of the priests to prevent it, whether by denunciation from the altar, or the getting up of rival schools. The public schools of the United States may not have so decided a religious character as we could desire ; but they are not anti-religious, much less irreligious. They are not Roman Catholic, neither are they infidel. No teacher would be long employed if known to inculcate, directly or indirectly, either infidel or immoral sentiments. Rome has branded them as "Godless ;" but it is only because they are not in her hands, nor do they teach her dogmas.

5. Something of this same influence is seen in the newspapers of the United States. Rome has been compelled to favor, to a certain extent, the periodical press. Her success in the higher walks of periodical literature has certainly not been successful. Her "monthlies" are neither numerous nor of a high order. And as to "quarterlies," she has but one of any considerable merit, and it has but a very limited circulation. Her *religious* newspapers, all combined, have not a circulation equal that of the two highest of the many Protestant journals ; whilst of her secular papers, it may be affirmed that those that have any merit have but little that is distinctly Roman Catholic about them.

The Roman Catholics in America read the great newspapers of the country, especially those of a political character ; nor could the influence of the Hierarchy prevent it, even if they dared to make the attempt. And yet it would be quite possible to name one of those papers—to say nothing of others—that does greater damage to the popular superstitions of the Romish Church and to the influence of her bishops and priests, than all the Protestant religious papers of the country combined.

6. That the influence of the civil and religious institutions of the United States is in many ways counteractive of that of the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church is quite certain. For instance : the confessional has nothing like the influence which it has in papal countries. That it is often resorted to by devout Romanists, especially by those of the humbler classes, is not denied. This is more true, however, even in their case of the *women* than of the men. It may be affirmed without hesitation, that there is no feature of Romanism that is more repugnant to American feelings than the confessional. No part of the entire system is more frequently attacked in discussion than this. Few Protestant husbands are quite willing, and very many Romanist ones are very reluctant, to have their Roman Catholic wives go to the confessional.

Occasionally the case of stolen articles recovered through the confessional is paraded in the papers, and the attempt is made to impose on unreflecting Protestants. But all sensible people are disposed to take the same view of the matter which was taken by the captain of a company of militia in Pennsylvania, that was called on to suppress a riot among some Irish Roman Catholics who were working on a railroad. Just as he was about to order his men to fire on the refractory party, the priest came running in great haste, and cried, "Don't fire !

Leave the matter to me ; I will settle it." "Stand back," said the captain ; "this is no place for you. If you can settle the difficulty, you could have prevented it."

The question of mixed marriages—that is, marriages between Roman Catholics and Protestants—has been the occasion of much difficulty in some countries in Europe. But with us it gives no trouble whatever. Marriage is regarded by the civil government in every State in the American Union as a civil institution, and is so treated. The marriage-ceremony may be performed by the civil magistrate without any religious ceremony accompanying, or it may be performed by a minister of religion of any communion. In nine cases out of ten—perhaps we might say in *ninety-nine* out of a hundred—it is performed by a minister of religion, accompanied by prayer and other religious services. The Catholic priest will no doubt enjoin upon the parties whom he may be called to marry the duty of bringing up their offspring in the faith of the Romish Church, but he will not make it a condition of his performing the service, nor will he be too strenuous in insisting, for he knows too well that the parties would not bear it, and that they would, in case he did so, go off to a magistrate, or, what is more probable, to a Protestant clergyman.

Whilst the most devout Romanists among us, especially those who have recently arrived from Europe, hold in reverence the doctrine of the mass and absolution, as well as confession, we are very confident that neither of these sacraments has with us anything like the force, in the minds of the Romanists generally, which they have in the Old World, or in the Spanish portions of the New. Masses for the dead are unquestionably said, and absolution is unquestionably pronounced by the priest, after confession. So too, extreme unction is administered. And yet we have known intelligent Roman Catholic mothers to be exceedingly shocked by the confident assertions of a priest, to the effect that the soul of a son, who had just died, was safe, just because he had gone through the form of absolution and extreme unction, which the dying person could not even comprehend:—exclaiming, when repeating the affair to their friends, "these priests seem to think that in dealing with us they are dealing with the ignorant and degraded people of Europe."

There has been a considerable sum of money collected among the Romanists in the United States within the last year or two for the help of the Pope in his difficulties. But the doctrine of the Temporal Dominion of his Holiness is far from being popular among the adherents of Rome in that country. Even the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary has not been well received by the more intelligent Romanists. Probably there is no part of the world where there have been so few miracles among the Roman Catholics as in the United States. If anything of the sort has occurred—and we are inclined to believe there has been something—it is certainly not blazoned abroad. We have almost no pilgrimages with us, perhaps because we are such a heretical nation that we have few or no sacred places or shrines, no holy wells, or health restoring fountains among us. We have not even a Notre Dame des Fouvrières in the whole land. We are quite sure that there is not a solitary bone of any of the Apostles, nor a single shred of the mantle of the Virgin Mary, or of that of Saint

Anne or Saint Elizabeth, or a hair of the head of any of them in any church in the United States. If there be, it has certainly not been our good fortune to hear of it. In saying this, however, we may only be confessing our own ignorance. Be it so. It is said that Rome has, or has had, three robes of the Saviour, like that at Trèves; but if so, she certainly has not sent one to America—we here use the word as we have often done before in this paper, as synonymous with the *United States*.

Without doubt, all sincere Romanists with us observe Lent, and the other sacred seasons of their Church, but we are very much mistaken if they practice its duties as rigidly as do their co-religionists in Papal lands, whether in the Old World or the New. The injunction of the Church with regard to the eating of meats during these sacred seasons, as well as on Friday, receives a very liberal interpretation from the high dignitaries of the Church, and is not so literally obeyed by any, save the most devout, as it ought to be in the estimation of very many of its adherents.

That the influence of the priests is very considerable, over the minds of their people, especially over the lowest and least educated classes, in matters appertaining purely to their religion, is not questioned. But the strength of this influence, even on subjects decidedly collateral and important, is certainly not great. For instance, many a priest finds to his sorrow, that the people of his own flock cannot be brought up to a compliance with his wishes on the subject of giving money, even for the most important purposes. Poor servant girls, and in some instances, hired young men, can be induced to give their one dollar, two dollars, or even more, per month, for the promotion of this or that enterprise which the priest recommends and strenuously enforces; but the wealthier classes seldom give with much liberality. Large sums are certainly raised by Romanists in America to build churches; but after all, the Old World—the Society of the Propaganda at Lyons, the St. Leopold's at Vienna, the St. Louis Society at Munich, the treasury of the Redemptorists in Belgium, are still greatly relied on. The conduct of the “refractory” with us, is sometimes laughable, and often very trying to the patience of the parish priest. We have seen a crowd of apparently very devout Irish Catholics on their knees on the steps of a village church during divine service, and at first, in our ignorance, we supposed that the church must be crowded. But not so; these people had found out that they could pray outside, and obtain all the benefits of mass or sermon, and avoid being compelled to pay to the priest his demands, as they would have had to do if they had entered the edifice. Subservient and obedient as are the children of Erin to the behests of the priests, they do learn in America how to avoid compliance with them.

On no point, however, has Rome had more difficulty with her followers in America than that of the ownership of church-edifices and cemeteries. As to the title-deeds of colleges, seminaries, and other institutions of that sort, the masses care but little. The bishops may do as they please in regard to them. But it is far otherwise in relation to the churches and graveyards. And in all parts of the United States there have been, from time to time, most serious troubles between the parties on this subject; so much so, that the legislatures of a number of the States have been compelled to interfere. The sentiment is so uni-

versal in the United States that all "church property," as it is called, should be held by "trustees," in the name and behalf of the people who worship in it, and who expect to be buried near it, that it may be emphatically called *American*. Even the Roman Catholics share in it, and very naturally desire to be the owners of the churches which they have built, and of the cemeteries which they have bought. The bishops demand that the title-deeds be made in their name; but the laws of the land require that such property shall be held in trust, and regulate the amount by statutes of *mortmain*. These laws are a great vexation to the bishops. Almost endless expedients are resorted to to evade them. In an extreme case, the bishop may refuse to send a priest to the Church in question, or institute one, if chosen by the people. But the people have some power in their hands, for they may disavow the authority of a bishop, and become independent for a time, or even do what is dreadful—turn Protestant! Certainly, Rome has rather a hard time of it with us in such cases.

There have been cases of priests applying the horsewhip, or resorting to other modes of physical force, in order to control the refractory, but such instances have not been frequent we apprehend—certainly not to compare in frequency with what occurs in Ireland and some other papal countries. Now and then something of this sort occurs among us: but we apprehend that few priests will have the courage to repeat such an insult to humanity. A few years ago a priest in one of the villages of the State of New York was fined by the civil magistrate in the sum of \$80 (or 400 francs,) for horsewhipping one of his parishoners! Another in the State of Connecticut was prosecuted before a civil court for a similar outrage.

It is often asserted that the bishops and priests of Rome have great influence in the political elections and the affairs of the civil government. This is no doubt true to a certain extent; and political demagogues have been but too ready to avail themselves of it, or seek to do so, in order to carry their measures. But there are powerful counter-acting influences with us, that make themselves felt when the occasion demands. The last Administration of the general government but one, (that of President Pierce,) was considered, whether justly or unjustly, to have gone so far in that direction that an American party was formed which vastly contributed to break it down, and to defeat the political hopes of all those who sympathized with it. So much so, that the last Administration, (that of President Buchanan,) although its chief was well known to be on terms of warm friendship with some of the prominent bishops of the Romish Church, was compelled to avoid showing much favor to that sect. The same thing may be asserted of the present Administration. There is a sleepless jealousy in the United States, among the Protestants, that will ever and anon create a political party that will break down any and all other parties that go too far in their efforts to tamper with the Roman Catholics as a sect or people, apart or separate from their fellow-citizens. There is no intelligent American Protestant who is unwilling that his Roman Catholic fellow-citizens should have their full share in offices of honor and profit in the government of the United States, as well as in all the State governments, but he will concede nothing more.

Whatever may be the influence of the Romish Hierarchy in America, over the less enlightened masses of their co-religionists, it is certain that they find among the higher and more intelligent classes not a few who cannot be swayed by the *sic volo* or the *sic jubeo* of a priest. We will give an instance—although it concerns a distinguished man who is still living. We do it the more willingly, because it reflects so much honor upon him. The fact which we are about to state has never been published in America, so far as we know. It is this : General Jackson, when President of the United States, determined to remove certain public moneys that were in deposit in the then existing Bank of the United States. Mr. Duane, the Secretary of the Treasury, to whose office it appertained to make the removal, refused to do it, and resigned his place. The President appointed as his successor Mr. Roger B. Taney, who held the post of Attorney General of the United States, putting in his place (as Attorney General,) the late Mr. Benjamin F. Butler. The President and Directors of the Bank, rightly apprehending that Mr. Taney might not be averse to a measure to which Mr. Duane had been opposed, employed all the influences at their command to dissuade him from taking a step which they deemed to be so injurious to that institution, as well as to what was (in their opinion) demanded by the best interests of the public. Among other things, they prevailed on the Archbishop and clergy of the Roman Catholic Church in Baltimore, to which Communion Mr. Taney belonged, and to which he still belongs, to address him a letter, in which the attempt was made, as he thought, to avail themselves of their spiritual relations in order to induce him not to take the contemplated step. But the attempt utterly failed. Mr. Taney read the letter to the member of the cabinet of President Jackson who related the fact to us, and then, with scorn, threw it into the fire, exclaiming with great indignation, "*These people forget that they are not in Europe.*" Mr. Taney is very far from being the only Roman Catholic in the United States who would have acted in this way.

But what need is there of words? This paper has already exceeded the limits we assigned to it. We must hasten to a conclusion. The sum of what may be said on this subject is this : That although the Roman Catholic Church in the United States has changed none of her dogmas, (which, indeed, could not be expected from a Church that professes to be infallible,) the Roman Catholic Religion wears some aspects that are in some measure peculiar to that country. We will specify a few. She is compelled to be, or profess to be, the friend of toleration, and even of Religious Liberty. Some of her organs and advocates have even been clamorous, to an extent that is suspicious, on the subject. She has been forced to be the friend of popular, even of republican, institutions, and some of her priests have even had the courage to mention that Rome has always and everywhere been the advocate of both civil and political liberty, and that she has ever professed friendship for popular education, (though with some reserve,) and for the freedom of the press! In all these respects the language of some of her friends forms a striking contrast with the utterances of the Bishops of France, Austria, Italy, Mexico and South America. On these subjects her intelligent laymen are far in advance of the clergy, and yet there are few of the latter who do not in

reality feel the influence of the political and religious atmosphere by which they are surrounded.

Still more : the Roman Catholics in the United States are daily, and in many ways, affected by influences silent as the dews of heaven, but still powerful. Their children go with Protestant children to the same public schools in many places ; in many cases their children attend the Protestant Sabbath Schools ; their young men are to be found in the same workshop or factory with Protestant young men, and share in discussions which often have a most decided influence on the peculiarities of their Church ; their young men often belong to the same fire companies, the same military companies, often attend the same temperance societies and political meetings with Protestant young men. The present war is having a wonderful effect in bringing them into contact with Protestant soldiers, Protestant chaplains, Protestant prayer-meetings in the camp, Protestant tracts and the New Testament.

In many respects Romanism with us wears a considerable resemblance to Protestantism. Its more repugnant features are concealed as much as possible. The infamous things in the past history of the Roman Catholic Church are plausibly explained away or denied. It is felt that the less said about the atrocities of Rome in ages gone by—such as the persecutions of the Albigenses and Waldenses, the Huguenots in France, the Protestants in Flanders, in Hungary, in Poland, and the events in England in the reign of Bloody Mary, or even about the sale of indulgences, the better. No priest with us would dare to boast of infamous conduct among the female members of his parish, as is reported of some in Ireland, in Cuba, in Mexico, in South America. If a priest becomes openly a drunkard, or a bad man in any way, he is not allowed to remain long in the same parish. He is sent to some distant part of the country, or to Canada, or back to Europe, if not deposed.

As in other Protestant countries, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States is a far better Church—exerts a far better influence on the community—than it does in countries where it has the ground to itself. It does incomparably more for the elevation of its people and their moral instruction, than in any papal country with which we have any acquaintance. The Roman Catholic Church in Lower Canada, in Hayti, in Mexico, Central America and South America, will not begin to compare with that of the United States. With us, the clergy of Rome must be able to do something more than baptize children, confess the living, and say masses for the dead. They must preach, and preach a great deal, and preach respectably, if they would retain their hold on their people, and especially their young men. They must treat their people with the respect due to manhood, if they would even maintain their present position, which, in many respects, is far from being well-assured. Rome is, in some sense, on her good behaviour with us. But she acts in the main prudently. Occasionally an ambitious prelate or a blatant editor does or says indiscreet things. Her most knowing bishops—bishops that most clearly comprehend the demand of the times—are very anxious to have a better educated class of priests. The greater part of those who come from Europe are far from being what the country needs. Even Maynooth fails to supply a priesthood that is exactly what the United States demand.

With the liberal and just course of the government the Romanists in

the United States are sincerely content. They have no ground of complaint—they make none. In the struggle of the Revolution (1775-'83) they stood shoulder to shoulder with the Protestants. Charles Carroll of Carrollton was as earnest and honest a patriot as John Adams, and sincerely respected as such. The present Chief Justice of the United States (Mr. Taney,) has never given a decision that can be charged with a bias, even the slightest, towards Romanism, although he was born and brought up in that faith and adheres to it still. He and his predecessor, the late Chief Justice Marshall, have held that high office during more than three-fourths of the period that has elapsed since the government, under the present Constitution, has existed. At this moment not a few of the ablest officers in the civil government, as well as in the army and navy, are Roman Catholics.

That civil and religious liberty in the United States—in other words, its civil and religious institutions and the influences which they create—should greatly, though silently, affect Roman Catholicism in that country may readily be believed. The most ignorant and degraded, as well as the most enlightened Romanist that comes to our shores from Ireland, from Belgium, from Germany, from Italy, feels that he breathes another atmosphere, if one may so speak, when he comes among us. A merchant in the city of New York had occasion not long since to take into his employment a poor Irish laborer, who had not been three months in the country. A few days afterwards, the Irishman came to him and begged, as a favor, that he would write a letter for him to his kinsfolk in Ireland. “But can you not write?” said the merchant. “No, your riv'rence, I cannot.” “Well,” said the merchant, “come to me in an hour or two, and I will write your letter.” He came at the appointed time, and the merchant wrote, as he dictated, an account of his voyage from Ireland to America, his subsequent adventures, and his present prospects. When he had gotten through he said, “And have you any thing more to say, Patrick?” “No, sir,” was his reply. But bethinking himself a moment, he said, “Yes, tell them one thing more.” “And what is it, Patrick?” said the merchant. “Tell them, sir, that in this happy country no praist can domineer over them, as in ould Ireland.” “Shall I tell them that?” “Yes, tell them *that*.”

The Romanists sometimes, but not very often, boast of conversions in the United States. That there are such conversions is denied by no one. Occasionally a popular female school, at the head of which is a female Jesuit, serves to proselyte youth, belonging to families of distinction, to Rome. A few Protestant ministers, chiefly of the Protestant Episcopal Church, have gone over to the Roman Catholic Church, and there have been also some cases of return. But as the Episcopal Church with us has a well-instructed ministry, among which the Tractarian or Puseyistic element never has been great, such defections have borne no comparison with what has occurred in England. Take the country as a whole, all well informed men will admit that if it were not for the continued and large immigration from Europe, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States could not possibly hold her own. One of her journals, (published in Philadelphia,) a few years ago admitted frankly, “that for every convert Rome makes in America she loses ten.” “This is a dreadful country for our Church,” said an Irish woman to the writer not long since. “On what account?” we asked. “Only think,” said

she, "my two brothers came over from Ireland good Catholics, but now they will not set their foot in a Catholic Church."

That the Roman Catholic Church in the United States has lost many of those who were born within her pale is affirmed by her own authorities. Two, and only two, will we cite. The first is the late Bishop England, of Charleston, South Carolina. That distinguished prelate, in writing to the Leopold Society of Vienna, nearly thirty years ago, states that in his diocese alone Rome had lost 50,000 souls! But we shall give the testimony of a more recent witness. In the autumn of 1851 we made a voyage from Liverpool to New York in the same steamship (the *Pacific*) which carried Father Mullen, a very agreeable and intelligent Irish priest, who was sent to America to collect funds for the then projected Roman Catholic University at Thurles in Ireland. Father Mullen traveled extensively in the United States, and six months after his arrival at New York he wrote from New Orleans to friends in Ireland, stating that, from all he was able to learn, he was of the opinion that Rome had lost not less than two millions of her children by the great "falling away," as he called it! He further said that several of the bishops had begged him to write to "the friends" in Ireland to keep the people from coming to America, if they did not wish to see them lose their souls. The estimate of Rome's loss by the "falling away" to which Father Mullen refers, may have been excessive. Nevertheless, we are quite sure that there is a great falling away.

Nor can we doubt that if the Roman Catholic people in the United States continue to be treated with kindness, their rights be duly maintained, their conscientious convictions properly respected, and the Gospel be presented to them clearly, prudently, and in the spirit of Christian love, Protestantism in that land can have nothing to fear in the future.

NOTE—In regard to the number of Roman Catholics in the United States, it is impossible to speak with much accuracy. The census of 1850 (the only one that gives any information on that point,) states the number of their church edifices, for that year, at 1,227; whilst the church edifices of all the other religious bodies were 36,956; in other words, the number of their church edifices, when compared with the others combined, was as one to thirty! The entire value of the church edifices in the United States, in that year, was given at \$87,446,871; the value of the Roman Catholic Church property was \$9,256,728. There was room in the 38,183 church edifices (the entire number,) sufficient for 14,270,189 persons; whilst there was room in the Roman Catholic church edifices for only 675,721 persons. But the Roman Catholic writers say, and say justly, that in many of their churches there are several services every Sabbath, and for different classes of people, so that the "church accommodation" above stated does not fairly represent the number of their worshippers. In reply to this, it may be said that many of the Protestant churches have several services each Sabbath, which are not attended, in all cases, by the same persons. Besides this, they have many meetings, and even church organizations, in school houses, court houses, private houses, etc., (which the Roman Catholics much more seldom do,) and, that of these "meetings," or "congregations," no account whatever is given in the census.

